In the claims:

For the Examiner's convenience, all pending claims are presented below with changes shown.

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: ~~generating, at least in part, an identifier to be associated with a group of at least two devices, the identifier being generated, at least in part, based, at least in part, upon respective source identifiers of the at least two devices.~~

retrieving a first vendor identifier (ID) from a table;

retrieving a second vendor ID from the table; and

generating a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the process of generating the virtual ID comprises: ~~the respective source identifiers comprise respective numbers; and the generating comprises:~~

rotating the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a rotated ID~~one of the respective numbers to generate a rotated number~~; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the ~~other of the respective numbers with the~~ rotated ID with a predetermined number.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

retrieving a value from a counter;

rotating the counter value to form a rotated counter value; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated counter value with the virtual ID.

~~wherein: the generating, at least in part, further comprises: rotating a value to generate a rotated value; and performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated value with a result of the logical exclusive-or of the other of the respective numbers with the rotated number.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein~~:~~ the counter value is based~~, at least in part,~~ upon an activation time.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

retrieving a third vendor ID from the table;

rotating the third vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a second rotated ID;

performing a logical exclusive-or of the second rotated ID with the virtual ID.

~~wherein: at least one of the source identifiers comprises a vendor identification.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~5~~, further comprising:

extracting the first vendor ID ~~identification~~ from a world wide name identifying a first device; and

extracting the second vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a second device.

~~, at least in part, at least one of the at least two devices.~~

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 ~~1~~, wherein: the first device and the second device ~~at least two devices~~ comprise physical devices.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3 ~~1~~, wherein the counter is incremented using a timer routine. ~~further comprising: generating, at least in part, a world wide name (WWN) to be associated with the group of devices, the WWN being generated, at least in part, based, at least in part, upon the identifier to be associated with the group of devices.~~

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a table to store two or more vendor identifiers (IDs); and

retrieving a second vendor ID from the table; and

circuitry to retrieve a first vendor ID and a second vendor ID from the table and to generate a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID ~~generate, at least in part, an identifier to be associated with a group of devices, the group of devices comprising at least two devices, the circuitry being capable of generating, at least in part, the identifier based, at least in part, upon respective source identifiers of the at least two devices~~.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the circuitry further rotates the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a rotated ID and performs a logical exclusive-or of the rotated ID with a predetermined number.

~~the respective source identifiers comprise respective numbers; and the circuitry is also capable of: rotating one of the respective numbers to generate a rotated number; and performing a logical exclusive-or of the other of the respective numbers with the rotated number.~~

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein: the circuitry further

retrieves a value from a counter, rotates the counter value to form a rotated counter value and performs a logical exclusive-or of the rotated counter value with the virtual ID.

~~is also capable of: rotating a value to generate a rotated value; and performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated value with a result of the logical exclusive-or of the other of the respective numbers with the rotated number.~~

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein: the counter value is based~~,~~ ~~at least in part,~~ upon an activation time.

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the circuitry further retrieves a third vendor ID from the table, rotates the third vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a second rotated ID and performs a logical exclusive-or of the second rotated ID with the virtual ID.

~~at least one of the source identifiers comprises a vendor identification~~

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein: the circuitry is also capable of extracting the first vendor ID ~~identification~~ from a world wide name identifying a first device; and extracting the second vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a second device.

~~, at least in part, at least one of the at least two devices.~~

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 14 ~~9~~, wherein: the first device and the second device ~~at least two devices~~ comprise physical devices.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11 ~~9~~, wherein the counter is incremented using a timer routine. ~~further comprising: generating, at least in part, a world wide name (WWN) to be associated with the group of devices, the WWN being generated, at least in part, based, at least in part, upon the identifier to be associated with the group of devices.~~

17. (Currently Amended) An article comprising: a storage medium having stored therein instructions that when executed by a machine result in the following:

retrieving a first vendor identifier (ID) from a table;

retrieving a second vendor ID from the table; and

generating a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID.

~~generating, at least in part, an identifier to be associated with a group of devices, the group of devices comprising at least two devices, the identifier being generated, at least in part, based, at least in part, upon respective source identifiers of the at least two devices.~~

18. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 17, wherein the process of generating the virtual ID comprises: ~~the respective source identifiers comprise respective numbers; and the generating comprises:~~

rotating the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a rotated ID ~~one of the respective numbers to generate a rotated number~~; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the ~~other of the respective numbers with the~~ rotated ID with a predetermined number.

19. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 18, further comprising:

retrieving a value from a counter;

rotating the counter value to form a rotated counter value; and

performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated counter value with the virtual ID.

~~wherein: the generating, at least in part, further comprises: rotating a value to generate a rotated value; and performing a logical exclusive-or of the rotated value with a result of the logical exclusive-or of the other of the respective numbers with the rotated number.~~

20. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 19, wherein~~:~~ the counter value is based~~, at least in part,~~ upon an activation time.

21. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 17, wherein the instructions when executed also result in:

retrieving a third vendor ID from the table;

rotating the third vendor ID by a predetermined amount to form a second rotated ID;

performing a logical exclusive-or of the second rotated ID with the virtual ID.

~~at least one of the source identifiers comprises a vendor identification.~~

22. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 17 ~~21~~, wherein the instructions when executed also result in: extracting the first vendor ID ~~identification~~ from a world wide name identifying a first device; and

extracting the second vendor ID from a world wide name identifying a second device. ~~, at least in part, at least one of the at least two devices~~.

23. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 22 ~~17~~, wherein: the first device and the second device ~~at least two devices~~ comprise physical devices.

24. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 19 ~~17~~, wherein the counter is incremented using a timer routine. ~~further comprising: generating, at least in part, a world wide name (WWN) to be associated with the group of devices, the WWN being generated, at least in part, based, at least in part, upon the identifier to be associated with the group of devices~~.

25. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a circuit board comprising a circuit card slot; and

a circuit card capable of being inserted into the slot, the circuit card comprising:

a table to store two or more vendor identifiers (IDs); and

circuitry to retrieve a first vendor ID and a second vendor ID from the table and to generate a virtual ID by randomizing the first vendor ID and the second vendor ID ~~generate, at least in part, an identifier to be associated with a group of devices, the group of devices comprising at least two devices, the circuitry being capable of generating, at least in part, the identifier based, at least in part, upon respective source identifiers of the at least two devices~~.

26. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein: the circuit board also comprises a processor coupled to a bus; and the circuit card slot is also coupled to the bus.

27. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 25, wherein: the first vendor ID corresponds to a first redundant array of inexpensive disk (RAID) and the second vendor ID corresponds to a second RAID ~~comprises the at least two devices~~.

28. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 27, wherein: the circuit card is coupled to the first RAID and the second RAID.

29. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 25, wherein: the circuit card is coupled to the first RAID and the second RAID ~~at least two devices~~ via a network.